

Lex Talionis,

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A RECEIPT for the Relief of our Present Distempers.

AS Epidemick diseases, when Infection hath possessed the ayre, reigns powerfully over the bodies of Mortalls, so sometimes even their Souls seem to be possessed with an Universall frensy, when the spirits of the ayre hath infused, as it were a spirituall madness into their mindes, to make them not only believe a lye, (even from the mouths of the most infamous) but like the deprav'd appetites of the body, which longs for all things that are poysonous to themselves; so they with as much earnestness hunt after all things that may encrease their distemper, and give more disorder to their understandings; This is one of the greatest punishments that God uses to revenge the greatest sins with, to give them up to the belief of lyes, and put a lye into the mouths of their Prophets; thus punishing sin with sin, makes them run round in a vicious Circulation, and Endless giddiness of Errour; From thence proceeds all those fears, those jealousies, that thus disturb our quiet, and repose under the government of the best of Princes, and best of Laws: From these suspicions proceed the want of commerce and dearth of trade: From these distractions, Envy and hatred amongst neighbours, Relations, and Kindred: From these fatall feuds false witnesses, Briberies and pensions for perjuries arise: I would it were in my power even with the mixture of my Bloud to make a Salve for these wounds, or give a Cordiall to these distempers so raging at this time amongst us: I shall now only prescribe the Ingredients as I have received them from a *Recipe*, under his hand, that cannot lye nor deceive us, and consequently I hope the better antidote against lyes, which is one of our present Evils; I shall not compound nor prescribe the measure of them, but leave every one to take what Dose he thinks his own distemper requires: I shall not paraphrase upon their perfections, because none whose madness is not beyond cure, can doubt them, coming from so perfect a principle; plainly therefore, and as I finde them, you shall have them.

The first and most Excellent against the multiplicity of vain and false Oaths, and the pernicious frensy of Perjury is, *Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord thy God in vain, and if not vainly, much less falsely.*

The second and most particular remedy against the distraction of detraction, is, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy Neighbour.*

The third is, to shew us the danger of this distemper, and the Remedy for it is, *If a false witness rise up against any man, to testify against him what is not true, The Judges, shall make great Inquisition between them, and if the witness be found a false-witness, and hath testified falsely against his Brother, Then shall he do to him as he thought to have done to his brother, so shall you put away the Evil from amongst you: and then eyes shall not pity him, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot, as Deut. Chap. 19. ver. 16. Neither shalt thou make distinction of persons; but you shall have one manner of law as well for strangers as your own Countrey-men: Lev. Chap. 24. ver. 22.*

This as you see being the law of God is followed by the Civil law, or *Jus Gentium*, and called *Lex Talionis*, as the most equall and rationall law of mankind. This did the most wise of Princes set down as a Maxim amongst his Proverbs: *A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he*
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that speaks lyes shall not escape, *Irov. Chap. 19. ver. 5.* And this doth our most equal and excellent Municipall laws of our Land intend, when it says, No Free-man shall be convicted but by the testimony of two sufficient, honest and credible witnesses; and their evidence (so called from the composition of *E* and *Videa*, which is clear and seen) ought to be, as Judge *Cook* says, *Luce clariores*, clearer then the light it self: And for the greater Caution in this important affair, our Law hath ordained that twelve able and understanding men of the vifnage or Neighbourhood, where the fact was said to be Committed, should upon their Conscience enquire, as well into the honesty and Integrity of the person accusing, and the person accused, as the clear and evident matter of fact before them.

Now if a common, cheat a pickpocket, a horse-stealer, or they whose Life hath been only conversant in coufenings and falsities, without any previous appearance of amendment; shall cause an honest upright and just person to all appearance, and without more probabilitys then his particular asseveration, what person think you (without the prejudice of his Nation) could believe it; But if indeed to pick a purse, to steal a horse, to cheat some young ofe of his money, were the designe; none more proper for that consult, then leud Indigent, and vitious persons; But to raise a War, to Subvert Governments, and introduce a Religion, to use for the principall contrivers of that, those who can raise nothing but a Regiment of Lice, whose credit would not go for a crackt groat, and whose Religion is worse then honest Atheism, is incredible; for amongst Barbarians there hath not perhaps been found, so horrid an example of perjury and partiality as is countenanced amongst us; much less can reason and Conscience look on it without a blush, and not suffer it to be redressed without a blemish to the Justice of our Nation: Let us therefore have recourse not only to our own reasons, but to the Law of God and Man, as well Natural as civil, and you will finde no security too great for innocency, no punishment too severe for perjury.

This, Gentlemen is our safety both as to Law and Conscience; this is the security of our lives, liberties, and fortunes, against all base, unworthy, and leud ill-livers, who as they have sold their Souls to vice and liberty, so will they sell our lives to maintain their Luxury: If therefore you will free your selves, and others, from this dangerous Infection; imitate the pious prudence of the Prophet *Daniel*, where seperating the two false witnesses, he intrapped them in their one lye, and caught them in the same snare their lust and mallice had laid for innocent blood, whose words crying to Heaven, (much more would her blood, had it been spilt,) she said, *Eternal God, which art the knower of all hidden things before they are come to pass, thou knowest they have born false-witness against me, and lo I dye, whereas I have done none of those things which those Men have maliciously forged against me, and the Lord heard her voice,* and returning to judgement because they had given false Testimony, they did with them as they would have done against their Innocent Neighbours, *Dan. Chap. 13.* This is the best and only way timely to stop this dangerous Infection from spreading farther amongst us, and prevent those ills that may over-take those that think themselves the securest of us.

So long live the King, and all that love him, and let the Enemies of our Lord the King be like the young Man *Abolon*, as *Kings, Chap. 18. Ver. 32.*

FINIS.